

Lifetime Learning Trends Narrative

Three major themes appear to be present when looking at future trends of Lifetime Learning: the rapidity of change, occupational obsolescence, and change in lifestyles. These themes point to the necessity that people be engaged in learning throughout their lives.

The Rapidity of Change

Technological and societal changes in particular point to a rapidly evolving living environment. Consequently, people will need continued learning activities to cope with life and meet the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Technological trends include:

- Cheaper, faster and larger memory capacity personal computers
- Interactive video
- Increased storage capabilities
- Optical scanning enhancements
- Robotics
- Integrated handheld devices

These all directly impact the importance placed on technical and computer competencies for everyone and impact ways to access lifetime learning opportunities.

Societal trends include:

- Increased leisure time
- Changes in family setting
- Multiple and changing careers
- Continual growth in multiculturalism

These all directly impact the adjustments that people are finding that they need to make in their personal lives and the lifetime learning that can help them make the adjustments.

Occupational Obsolescence

New developments, techniques and knowledge are evolving much more quickly than ever before. The formal education and training one brings to a job is outdated very shortly. Consequently, employees will need continued learning activities just to maintain acceptable levels of competence.

Work learning trends include:

- Online and distance education
- Individualized learning processes
- Higher education degrees no longer the learning “endgame”.
- Corporate universities
- Business/School partnerships

These all directly impact the changes in formal education delivery methods and curriculum structure that need to be made by K-12 and higher learning institutions to remain viable.

Changes in Lifestyle

Increasingly, people believe that a full and rich life is possible by maximizing their individual potential. Consequently, adults will need continuing learning activities to develop their interests as they move toward self-actualization.

Lifestyle learning trends include:

- Increased public use of the City’s Library, Museum, Community Center and Nature Center as lifetime learning providers
- Increased percentage of seniors who go online
- Increased desire for self-service
- Increased desire for remote and mobile access to information

These all directly impact the growing importance of the role in the community of the City’s lifetime learning venues and how they provide access to information and continuing learning opportunities for the full range of the general public’s interests.

Lifetime learning will play a very significant role in each resident’s quality of life. Providing excellent learning-based services that proactively address the changing environment is the challenge.